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ABSTRACT

Some researchers and practitioners believe that schools can play a leading role in preventing violence among youth. This document offers a framework for collaboration that moves from simply recognizing the problem to preparing youth to live peaceably in a diverse community. The "Creating a Peaceable School" program is based on the premise that youth should not only be taught the skills necessary to resolve differences without violence, but that they must also have an opportunity to utilize the skills daily in the community, school, and neighborhood. These life skills are learned by everyone in the school as part of a comprehensive school-based violence-prevention program. Central to the program is the implementation of a noncoercive discipline system designed to teach students self-discipline and responsibility. Kreidler defines the "peaceable classroom" as a warm and caring community in which five qualities are present: cooperation, communication, tolerance, positive emotional expression, and conflict resolution. In addition, six skill areas are fundamental to the achievement of a peaceable school: building a peaceable climate, understanding climate, understanding peace and peacemaking, mediating, negotiating, and group problem solving. Information on the Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution (IIDR) is included. (LMI)

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ED 380 908

## *Creating The Peaceable School* Mission

Richard Bodine, Donna Crawford, Fred Schrumpf

***Violence*** is a pervasive problem that touches every school and neighborhood and cuts across race, religion, and gender. While youth are particularly vulnerable to its effects, they are also resilient and reachable. School counselors, social workers, deans, psychologists, teachers, principals, administrators, and superintendents are in important positions to create primary prevention programs. Educators are often discouraged by the notion that prevention is not possible without total social reforms to end problems such as poverty, racism, and drug abuse. The problem with this view is that it can justify inaction, when there are interventions that can make a significant difference in breaking the cycle of violence.

The American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth (1993) reports, "We overwhelmingly conclude, on the basis of the body of psychological research on violence, that violence is not a random, uncontrollable, or inevitable occurrence....There is overwhelming evidence that we can intervene effectively in the lives of young people to reduce and prevent their involvement in violence....Conflict resolution education is integral to prevent violence among youth." Educators can become a leading force in reversing patterns of conflict and aggression. William DeJong (1994) concludes that in order for this to happen, the educators themselves must change. "They must learn and apply a new set of skills for managing and resolving conflict. Even more difficult, they must adopt a new style of classroom management, one that fundamentally involves a sharing of power with students so that students can learn how to deal with their own disputes."

*Creating The Peaceable School* offers a framework for collaboration among educators, community activists, parents, and youth in order to move from simply recognizing the problems related to living in a diverse and often violent society to being prepared to contribute and live peacefully in a diverse community. Peaceable schools challenge youth to believe and act on the understanding that a nonviolent, pluralistic society is a realistic goal. This societal goal comes alive for students only when they can *live it* in a context significant to their life. School can be that context.

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## TOWARD THE GOAL OF PEACEABLE SCHOOLS

Peace is that state in which every individual is able to survive and thrive without being hampered by conflict, prejudice, hatred, antagonism, or injustice. Peace is not a static state of being, but rather a continual process of interaction based on a philosophy that espouses nonviolence, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation, respect, and tolerance. It is important to realize that peace is not the absence of conflict. When conflict occurs, as it inevitably will, it is recognized, managed,

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and resolved in ways that allow each individual to satisfy his or her basic needs, while respecting the rights of others. Conflict is; violence does not have to be!

In the peaceable school the pervasive theme touching the interactions between children, between children and adults, and between adults is the valuing of human dignity and self-esteem. According to William Kreidler (1990), "Peace is a realistic and attainable goal. It is also an inspiring ideal." Kreidler defines the peaceable classroom as a warm and caring community in which five qualities are present:

> ***Cooperation:*** Children learn to work together and trust, help, and share with each other.
>
> ***Communication:*** Children learn to observe carefully, communicate accurately, and listen sensitively.
>
> ***Tolerance*:** Children learn to respect and appreciate people's differences and to understand prejudice and how it works.
>
> ***Positive emotional expression*:** Children learn to express feelings, particularly anger and frustration, in ways that are not aggressive or destructive, and children learn self-control.
>
> ***Conflict resolution*:** Children learn the skills of responding creatively to conflict in the context of a supportive, caring community.

When schools become peaceable, they are safe and productive environments where students and teachers together can focus on learning. In the peaceable school, the classroom is the place where students gain the knowledge base and the skills needed to resolve conflicts nonviolently. The classroom is also the place where the majority of conflicts are resolved. The peaceable classroom is therefore the unit block of the peaceable school.

The classroom teacher is the key player in providing the learning opportunities required to create a peaceable environment in the school and in exemplifying the behaviors expected of a peacemaker. However, every adult in the school environment--principal, subject specialist, counselor, social worker, psychologist, secretary, supervisor, and so on--is a potential teacher of the concepts and behaviors of peace. As used the term teacher refers both to the classroom teacher and to others in the school environment who are in a position to teach, if not didactically, then by their example. Students will learn from whatever they observe: either appropriate and desirable behavior or inappropriate and undesirable behavior. Each person in the school must be diligently cognizant of his or her responsibility in this regard.

For a school to become a peaceable place, the coercive behaviors of both adults and children must be replaced with the skills and strategies of conflict resolution. These skills and strategies are the tools for building the peaceable school. This program stresses the modeling of nonviolent alternatives for dealing with conflict. Teachers are strategically challenged to disengage from punitive cycles and provided alternatives to coercive obedience training. Nonpunitive strategies for managing discipline and resolving conflict are powerful interventions that will ultimately create school cultures of nonviolence. Larry Brendtro and Nicholas Long assert in the 1994 Spring *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Problems*, "No amount of righteous anger can teach delinquents self-worth or cause them to empathize with their victims....Punishment seldom has the desired effect....Coercive schools and correctional settings are seedbeds for patterns of bullying and victimization....Violence begets violence." When teachers model conflict resolution skills, even kindergartners can begin to talk about their wants and find creative and positive alternatives to hitting, tantruming, or tattling.

The ability to express and resolve conflicts is central to the peaceful expression of human rights. The skills and strategies of conflict resolution are also the skills of peace. Conflict resolution and peacemaking should be viewed as a responsibility inherent in citizenship in a democratic society. When children peacefully express their concerns and seek resolution to problems that take into account common interests, they promote the values of human dignity and self-esteem. Strong, valid reasons exist for instituting conflict resolution programs in schools. Fundamental outcomes of comprehensive school-based conflict resolution programs include but are not limited to the following:

- Using mediation, negotiation, and group problem solving to resolve disputes improves the school climate, making it safe and conducive to learning.

- Conflict resolution training helps students and teachers deepen their understanding of self and others and provides a forum for addressing concerns.

- Conflict resolution training provides the recipient of the training with important life skills.

- Shifting the responsibility for resolving conflicts to students reduces violence, vandalism, chronic school absence, and suspension.

- Conflict resolution training increases skills in listening, critical thinking, and problem solving--skills basic to all learning.

- Negotiation and mediation emphasize the ability to see others' points of view and the peaceful resolution of differences--skills crucial for one to live in a multicultural world.

These outcomes are realized when the program is applied consistently on a schoolwide basis, building on knowledge and skills each year as students progress from grade level to grade level. The return on that investment of time and money on conflict resolution training is a greater acceptance of responsibility on the part of students for their behavior--and a corresponding decrease in the need for adult involvement in the management of student behavior.

**Conflict Resolution Strategies**

The strategies of mediation, negotiation, and group problem solving are central to the creation of the peaceable school. Students who learn to use these strategies have a way to deal with differences without aggression or coercion. Mediation and negotiation are strategies helpful in situations where a conflict exists between individuals; group problem solving is an approach designed to help a group reach a consensus decision about a problem concerning the group. Although doing so requires the skill of a trained adult mediator, the mediation strategy is also an effective strategy for managing conflicts between groups, including gangs. The six steps in each of these conflict resolution strategies are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Step 1*: | Agree to negotiate, mediate, or group problem solve. |
| *Step 2*: | Gather points of view. |
| *Step 3*: | Focus on interests. |
| *Step 4*: | Create options for mutual gain (win-win). |
| *Step 5*: | Evaluate options. |
| *Step 6*: | Create an agreement. |

**Fundamental Skill Areas**

There are six skill areas fundamental to the achievement of a peaceable school. The *Creating The Peaceable School* curriculum (Research Press 1994) provides the teacher a theoretical overview of the skill area, then a number of activities and strategies to engage students in developing a knowledge base and acquiring critical skills.

## 1. BUILDING A PEACEABLE CLIMATE

Responsibility and cooperation are the foundation on which all other skills in the peaceable school are built. In order to manage student behavior without coercion, the adults in the school must view acceptable behavior as the responsibility of each student, and each student must accept this responsibility. The focus is on developing students' knowledge about responsibility--what choices define responsibility and what rights correspond to it. As students and teachers together build the peaceable climate, they define and experience cooperation in ways that will make that idea come alive in the school and the classroom.

## 2. UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

A shared understanding of the nature of conflict is a prerequisite for students to engage in successful conflict resolution. The program provides information and activities designed to instill a shared understanding of the nature and causes of conflict, as well as of possible responses to conflict and its potential benefits. The idea that psychological needs are the underlying cause of conflict is particularly useful to students as they seek common interests to resolve disputes.

## 3. UNDERSTANDING PEACE AND PEACEMAKING

The program provides information and activities to help students look at the concept of peace and put this concept into practice. Pursuing interests rather than positions allows students to accept diversity and to view diversity as an asset in the peaceable school. Activities are designed to help students learn the specific behaviors associated with peacemaking (such as understanding different perceptions, empathizing, dealing with emotions, managing anger, communications skills, etc.) and to evaluate their own performance as peacemakers.

## 4. MEDIATION

Mediation is defined as assisted conflict resolution between disputants for use within the classroom and as a schoolwide vehicle for resolving conflicts. Training activities cover a six-step mediation process designed to allow students to gain the skills to act as neutral third parties in facilitating conflict resolution between disputants.

## 5. NEGOTIATION

The concept of negotiation is defined as unassisted conflict resolution between two disputants. The program provides training activities in skills designed to help disputants state their individual needs, focus on their interests rather than their positions, and generate options for mutual gain. Training activities focus on a six-step negotiation process paralleling that presented for mediation.

**6. GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING**

Group problem solving is presented as a creative strategy to deal with disputes involving a significant percentage of the classroom population. In this strategy, the teacher uses a class meeting format to facilitate the group problem solving process. Although the teacher's role is central, the group itself is responsible for working to achieve a consensus decision that they can implement to resolve the conflict. The group problem solving strategy can be utilized by any organized group in a school to deal with conflicts affecting group members.

The fundamental skills taught and utilized by students to resolve their conflicts are the same skills adults learn and utilize to resolve their conflicts in the school and the community. In creating peaceable schools, school administrators and teachers play a critical role in reaching out to the leaders of the community and to families to engage them in violence prevention and conflict resolution strategies. One of the keys to effective prevention is for youth to hear a consistent message of non-violence from multiple sources. The "peaceable school" expands into the "peaceable neighborhood" through work with parents, police, churches, and neighborhood coalitions. This program joins youth, educators, parents and the community as partners to create safe schools.

**William DeJong, a lecturer at the Harvard School of Public Health, reports in the 1994 Fall issue of *School Safety*, "The best school-based violence prevention programs seek to do more than reach the individual child. They instead try to change the total school environment, to create a safe community that lives by a credo of nonviolence and multicultural appreciation."**

**PRESS RELEASE**

## Conflict Resolution in Schools Program Having National and International Impact in Schools

*Creating the Peaceable School* (Research Press, 1994) program, developed by former Urbana educators--Donna Crawford, Richard Bodine and Fred Schrumpf, reflects the authors' continuing commitment to a vision of peace and their awareness of the educator's responsibility for creating an environment where students can learn and accept their power to create peace within themselves and within the world. **Students in peaceable schools understand how to make peace. They are peacemakers.**

This program originated with the theory and practice presented in two earlier books that the authors wrote about programs they developed during their years as educators in the Urbana, Illinois schools. (See attachment for further information about the authors.)

In 1992, Donna Crawford resigned from an administrative position with Urbana School District to found the Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution. In 1993, she was joined by Richard Bodine, former Urbana School District elementary principal. During the past two years the Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution has provided the *Creating The Peaceable School*: Conflict Resolution in Schools training and on-site technical assistance for over 4000 Illinois educators. As a result of these efforts, schools throughout the state are successfully implementing conflict resolution programs.

Donna Crawford and Richard Bodine recently returned from Australia. They spent a month consulting for the New South Wales Department of Education. During their stay in Australia, they trained over 400 educators to implement the *Creating the Peaceable School* program. Fred Schrumpf has trained a number of educators in Canada.

The authors and IIDR staff have presented the program in a number of states throughout the U. S. These states include, Massachusetts, Washington, Michigan, Texas, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Indiana, Georgia, Colorado, Ohio, California, and Oregon.

***Creating The Peaceable School* Synopsis**

*Creating the Peaceable School* is founded on the premise that in order for youth to be capable of surviving and thriving in an increasingly violent society, they must not only be taught the skills necessary to resolve differences without violence, but they must also be given the opportunity to utilize these skills daily in the classroom, in the school, in their neighborhoods and in the community. In the peaceable school children and adults manage and resolve conflicts by negotiating, by mediating and by participating in group problem solving. These life skills, learned by everyone in the school are part of a comprehensive school-based violence prevention program. Central to this program is the implementation of a noncoercive discipline system designed to teach students self-discipline and responsibility.

Imagine a school or classroom where learners manage and resolve conflicts, both with and without adult assistance--a place where adults and children work together and respect, trust, help, and share with one another--where students express feelings in ways that are neither aggressive nor destructive. *Creating The Peaceable School* presents a comprehensive plan for achieving this vision. Central to the plan is the creation of a cooperative school environment, achieved through the institution of a rights and responsibilities approach to discipline and the use of cooperative learning. Through the conflict resolution strategies of mediation, negotiation, and group problem solving, students learn to recognize, manage, and resolve conflict in peaceful, noncoercive ways.

For information about *Creating The Peaceable School*, please contact Donna Crawford at the **Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution** 110 W. Main Street, Urbana, Illinois 61801 Phone (217) 384-4118 Fax (217) 384-8280

**Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution**

The Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution is a nonprofit organization created to provide educational programs and conflict resolution services throughout Illinois. IIDR is sponsored by a partnership among the Illinois State Bar Association, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the law schools at Northern Illinois University, the University of Illinois, and Southern Illinois University. IIDR staff have extensive experience in the field of education and dispute resolution. The collaboration of this culturally diverse team of accomplished professionals insures high quality results in all aspects of program development, training, and implementation.

The thrust of the efforts of the IIDR is based on the premise that schools, as significant places in the lives of youth, must be in the forefront of a change in the way people think about and resolve their disputes. IIDR is nationally recognized for its experience in designing and conducting successful training programs for educators, students, parents, agencies, and governmental institutions. In the past two years, IIDR has provided training for over 4000 Illinois educators in a variety of workshops such as:

- Culture, Conflict and Communication
- Peer Mediation
- Creating the Peaceable School
- Dispute Resolution Systems to Manage Conflict And Change
- Talking It Out: Violence Prevention In Secondary Schools
- Creative Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature
- Lead Management: Building Consensus Among Faculty

In addition, the Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution develops and field tests curriculum, produces videotapes, and provides on-site technical assistance to support local efforts to establish conflict resolution programs in schools. The IIDR volunteer core of judges, attorneys, law students and law educators from all areas of the state are recruited and trained to assist in schools. The IIDR clearinghouse collects and provides information, resources, newsletter, and networking assistance to institutions, groups, agencies, organizations and individuals to aid in establishing, improving, supporting and expanding dispute resolution programs.

**Donna Crawford, *IIDR Executive Director,*** founded the Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution in 1992. She is an experienced public school teacher and administrator, mediator, reality therapist and dispute resolution trainer. She holds a master's degree in special education and an advanced certificate of education in administration from the University of Illinois. Her training in alternative dispute resolution methods includes the Justice Center of Atlanta, Georgia; Illinois State Board of Education Department of Specialized Services; Divorce Mediation Institute of Ann Arbor, Michigan; and the Harvard University Law School. She serves as a practicum supervisor for the Institute for Reality Therapy, Los Angeles, California and is Reality Therapy Certified. Donna is a member of the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, National Association of Mediation in Education, the Mediation Council of Illinois, Academy of Family Mediators, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National Association of School Administrators. She serves on the National Association of Mediation in Education and the National Institute for Dispute Resolution joint committee to bring conflict resolution programs to colleges of education. She co-authored *Peer Mediation: Conflict Resolution in Schools, Research Press, (1991), The School for Quality Learning: Managing the School and the Classroom the Deming Way, Research Press (1993), and Creating the Peaceable School, Research Press, (1994).*

**Richard Bodine, *IIDR Education Program Service Team Manager***, holds an undergraduate degree in teaching of mathematics and chemistry and has taught math and science in upper elementary, middle school, high school and junior college. He has a master's degree in special education specializing in gifted children and an advanced certificate of education in administration from the University of Illinois. He has been a secondary school administrator and director of special regional education programs. He has consulted with numerous schools throughout the country on gifted education, individualized learning programs and administrative issues. He has directed several summer teacher training institutes on innovative practices. He has taught graduate level courses in administration at the University of Illinois including several semesters of the course on the principalship. **For twenty years he served as principal of Leal Elementary School in Urbana.** In 1992, he was the recipient of the Illinois State Board of Education "Those Who Excel" award as outstanding administrator. He is the co-author of the books, *The School for Quality Learning, Managing the School and the Classroom the Deming Way, Research Press, (1993)* and *Creating the Peaceable School, Research Press (1994).* Richard holds Training Certificates from CDR Associates of Boulder, Colorado for Mediation, for Dispute Management Systems Design, and for Conflict Resolution in Organizations.

**Fred Schrumpf, IIDR consultant,** (former Urbana Middle School social worker) has practiced school social work for twelve years from the early childhood to high

school level and has taught seven years at Idaho State University and the University of Illinois. Fred holds master's degrees in both social work and secondary education, from the University of Illinois. He is currently an independent consultant working throughout the U.S. and Canada. More than one thousand teachers, administrators, and support staff were trained by Fred last year in peer mediation. He also has presented numerous workshops on negotiation skills, conflict resolution and the family, the peaceable school, celebrate self, teacher as advisor, and team building. In 1990 he was named Social Worker of the Year by the Illinois Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Fred is co-author of *Peer Mediation: Conflict Resolution in School, Research Press (1991), Life Lessons: An Advisory Guide for Teachers, Research Press, (1993),* and *Creating the Peaceable School, Research Press, (1994).*